wise the interconnections of the central processing unit integrated circuit to data collecting random access memory, to peripheral device interface circuitry, to memory management circuitry, and to communications interface circuitry is all by permanently soldering in existing devices.

In prior art devices, machine instructions have been carried in non-dynamic memory, that is, in read only memory devices, better known as erasable programmable read only memory or EPROMS which are programmed during manufacture and are permanently installed in the existing device to control the operation of the central processing unit integrated circuit. A change in machine instructions is only accomplished by extensive retrofit of components.

Existing terminals employ processor integrated circuits which are able to process data in eight bit partitions, which, due to the nature of such eight bit architecture of the processor integrated circuit, limits the direct access of the central processing unit to 64,000 bytes of data.

In existing prior art units, electrostatic discharge protection is afforded by use of conductive metallic enclosures or by use of metallic sheathing applied to the inner walls of the enclosure of the devices, such sheathing or metallic enclosures being electrically connected to ground terminals of external devices when interconnection of hand-held data entry terminals is effectuated. Such methods of electrostatic discharge protection are susceptible to transient signals coming into the devices over interconnection circuitry from exterior units, though affording reasonable protection from transient signals created by electrostatic discharge arising on the exterior of the unit.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to hand-held computer apparatus and in particular to hand-held data entry terminals used by route delivery drivers to enter data and to prepare printed data.

A hand-held data entry terminal is provided which comprises an elongated housing formed to be comfortably held in the hand of a user while data is entered by such user on the keypad thereof with the user's opposite hand. The front wall of the enclosure provides a display which may be either of an eight line or sixteen line dimension and features a keypad having a plurality of numeric, alphabetic anal function keys. A flexible strap is removably mounted to the rear wall of the unit providing a flexible strap member with which the user may retain his or her hand against the rear wall of the enclosure. The strap member is removably fixed to the rear of the enclosure by clamping elements retaining the end of the strap member to the rear wall of the device. The clamping nerobets may be conveniently adjusted by the user to release the ends of the strap member through use of simple hand tools. The strap member may therefore be exchanged with a replacement when wear necessitates repair.

A first end wall of the enclosure is provided with a removable hatch element overlying a battery receiving chamber wherein a plurality of non-rechargeable batteries may be inserted by the user. Alternatively, a battery pack member comprising a plurality of ganged together rechargeable batteries may be inserted in the battery receiving chamber to provide main power to the device. Paired probe elements are disposed upon an inner wall of the battery receiving chamber which engage a conductive element on the ganged together rechargeable battery unit whereupon said probes are electrically interconnected. An elongate bar is disposed at a selected end of the battery pack member to provide a key to prevent improper insertion of the battery pack member within the battery receiving chamber and insuring that the conductive element on the battery pack member engages the probe elements of the battery receiving chamber.

A battery recharging circuit is provided within the enclosure which senses the interconnection of the probe elements to discriminate between rechargeable batteries and non-rechargeable batteries within the battery receiving chamber. When rechargeable batteries are present in their ganged together unit arrangement, said recharging circuitry is enabled to pass recharging power to the batteries. When non-rechargeable batteries are present in the battery receiving chamber, the probe elements are not engaged or electrically interconnected. This open circuit condition is sensed and the recharging circuitry is disabled from providing recharging power to the batteries within the battery receiving chamber.

A second end of the invention is provided with a removable end cap having thereon a connector for electrical interconnection with mating devices. Said end cap encloses a cavity within said second end wherein a slot is provided to provide access to an internal electrical connector. Optional memory device carrying subassemblies having a generally planar configuration and contact means on a side thereof may be disposed within said slot to engage the electrical conductor disposed therein. Such optional memory subassemblies are allowed to function as discrete memory units, having capacity to store or be read repeatedly.

Disposed upon a wall of said cavity of said second end are a plurality of upstanding pin conductors. Within said end cap are provided complementary sockets disposed upon said cap to engage said upstanding pins of said cavity when said end cap is installed upon said second end of said housing. The sockets of the end cap are electrically connected to corresponding conductor elements of a D-sub type connector mounted to the exterior of the end cap.

Further provided within said cavity is an elongate opening disposed to provide a passageway for an electrically insulative strip to be selectively passed therethrough. Said insulative strip is a generally flexible elongate planar body initially disposed at one end thereof between a miniature battery and a battery contact and having a free end extending through said elongate opening. Said battery is of the miniature disk-like, lithium type and is provided as back up power to the central processor circuitry. When the invention device is ready to be placed in service, the end cap is removed and the insulative strip is removed from the device, thereby providing battery power to the circuitry to which it relates within the unit.

Within the housing of the invention are provided plural circuit boards, including a display carrying assembly with associated control circuitry therewith. Interconnection between said display carrying assembly and a main elongate, generally planar, circuit board is made by means of the contact engagement of terminal elements by an intermediary resilient conductor element having a plurality of generally parallel miniature conductors therein disposed to engage complementing terminal elements of the circuit board to be interconnected.

The preferred embodiment of the invention is provided with integrated electrostatic discharge protection associated with the incoming signal paths of the device. Because of this novel advance, the housing of the data entry terminal may be